THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various;—that the mind
Of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleas'd with novelty, may be indulg'd.
COWPER.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For the Port Folio.

THE AMERICAN LOUNGER.

BY SAMUEL SAUNTER, ESQ.

No. 171.

Aimez donc la raison: que toujours vos écrits
Empruntent d'elle seule et leur lustre et leur prix.
BOILEAU.

MR. SAUNTER,

THERE remains the question on the general merits of the Sister-Odes, and with regard to which Dr. Johnson has expressed himself as follows: 'These Odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they strike rather than please; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. *Double, double, toil and trouble.* He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tip-toe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease and nature.'

In this my concluding letter, I propose to myself to express without reserve my individual sentiments; sentiments which will characterise me, I believe, rather as a moderator than a partizan, either of the poet or of any one of his critics. I have always regarded Dr. Johnson's remarks, however unjust in particular instances, as still more ill-natured than unjust; and I apprehend that those, whom they displease, are offended even less by the unsoundness of the judgment, than by the unamiableness of the temper, they discover. Nothing can be more obvious, than that a critic, who, in a composition where every reader perceives something to admire, points out nothing but imperfections, must be ill received; and thus it is, I think, with Dr. Johnson's criticisms on Gray. Neither the Progress of Poesy nor the Bard are perfect compositions; but the common voice of readers will for ever place them in the first class of English poetry. Had Dr. Johnson admitted this, or any thing approaching to this, we should not have doubted the candour by which he was governed, in spite of his particular objections. It is his silence upon all topics of praise, rather than his anxiety to expose faults, that fills us with contempt for his decision. To remedy, as much as possible, this inconvenience, I shall quote his general opinion, on the favourable side, of the abilities of Mr. Gray: 'To say that he has no beauties, would be unjust; a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said, that a good design was ill directed.' I have a doubt, which I cannot resolve, whether the foregoing sentence were written with reference to the *beauties* of the Sister-Odes, or to the *beauties* of Gray's poetry, these Odes being first *excluded.*

What I have just said above, I have

said directly and indirectly, through the whole series of these letters; that I esteem the Odes before us to be at once of the first merit, and at the same time not free from faults. In Dr. Johnson's review of Mr. Gray's poetical pretensions, it may be observed, that the qualities he tacitly denies him are, Imagination and Taste. Now, on the one hand, it is abundantly evident, that Gray really possessed very considerable portions of both; and, on the other, it is not absolutely untrue, that his *great learning* and *great industry* do, in some sort, appear more conspicuously than the *vis poetica*. A question arises to which it is not easy to reply: Had Gray not possessed *great learning* and *great industry*, would he have been a poet? I think, he would. Would he have been a Collins or a Burns? I think, he might. I even think, that without his learning and industry, he might have been a poet still superior to what he was. This, however, on many accounts, is a very delicate argument. I proceed on the ground, that a mind not too largely furnished with foreign treasure will draw more deeply from itself; and I am satisfied that it often happens to those who are capable of pleasing by the aid of original powers alone, that they are plagiarists through mere dint of learning; and I say it, with a view as well to philosophy as to letters, that it is the vice of books (for all things have their vices) to make repeaters and copyists of such as are qualified to be discoverers and teachers. This is a consequence which flows naturally from our bias to repose. It gratifies our indolence, to adopt the sentiments or language of others. But, another cause is this: reading often transforms a poet into an amateur, attaching a man rather to the productions of the art than to the impulses of nature. I might pursue this inquiry much further; but it is time for me to take an opposite view of the subject. Men's minds are so variously constituted, that the causes which injure some are of the highest benefit to others. Books, which undoubtedly assist every other effort of genius, are not always injurious to poetry. They expand, they elevate, they fertilise; they kindle the fire, they brighten the flame, and they bestow the fuel: in other words, they awaken the fancy, and they impart expression. When I say, that Mr. Gray might have been a better poet, had he been without his learning and his industry, I say that which can only be spoken of as a thing possible. It may be, that nature did not work in him so strongly but that, without the example and assistance of books, the lyre might have been silent in his hands. Of that example and assistance it is certain that he largely availed himself: whether they were necessary to him, or not, is an essential but intricate question. I shall venture, however, to declare, of his poetry as we see it, that, without denying him very high claims of an original nature, his learning and his industry are the great bases of its reputation. I declare this, without adopting the language of Johnson, as cited at the commencement of this letter. I will not say, because I in no wise think, that these Odes are 'marked by glittering accumulations of *ungraceful* ornaments;' but I say, that they glitter with accumulations of *borrowed* ornaments; and this is an observation that may be applied to his poems in general. Mr. Mason has somewhere spoken of the scrupulousness with which he acknowledged even a borrowed epithet; but this scrupulousness can be allowed to Mr. Gray's literary character (and I am sincerely disposed to allow it) only on the supposition, that he was not equally scrupulous on more considerable occasions, or that when he used the ideas and language of others, it was without intention or consciousness; a thing which, in some instances, it is very natural, and in others very unnatural, to believe. In spite of the scrupulousness contended for by Mr. Mason, some (though, by no means, the whole) of the passages cited by Mr. Wakefield appear as proper to be referred to as those actually given by Mr. Gray; and a very little reading will enable us still further to dispute the poet's originality.

I have shrunk from the discussion of the great question into which I had entered, on the influence of learning on the efforts of genius; but there is one particular which has a peculiar claim to attention, while we are considering the merits of the Sister-Odes. Though not hinted at by Johnson, a very popular charge against them is that of *obscurity*. In this view, Mr. Mason has entered largely into their defence. I propose to take a different view of the obscurity imputed to these Odes; but, previously, I beg leave to quote the sentiments of Mr. Mason:

'I cannot quit this and the preceding Ode, without saying a word or two of my own concerning the obscurity that has been imputed to them, and the preference which, in consequence, has been given to his Elegy. It seems as if the persons, who hold this opinion, suppose that every species of poetry ought to be equally clear and intelligible; than which position nothing can be more repugnant to the specific natures of composition, and to the practice of ancient art. Not to take Pindar and his Odes for an example (though what I am here defending were written professedly in imitation of him), I would ask, Are all the writings of Horace, his Epistles, Satires, and Odes, equally perspicuous? Amongst his Odes, separately considered, are there not remarkable differences, of this very kind? Is the spirit and meaning of that which begins, *Descende cælo, et dic, age, tibiâ* (Ode 4, lib. 3), so readily comprehended as *Persicos odi, puer, apparatus* (Ode 38, l. 1)? and is the latter a finer piece of lyrical composition, on that account? Is *Integer vitæ, scelerisq. purus* (Ode 22, l. 1) superior to *Pindarum quisquis studet æmulari* (Ode 2, l. 4), because it may be understood at the first reading, and the latter not without much study and reflection? Now, between these Odes, thus compared, there is surely equal difference, in point of perspicuity, as between the *Progress of Poesy* and the *Prospect of Eton*, the *Ode on the Spring* and the *Bard?* But, say these objectors, "The end of poetry is universally to please. Obscurity, by taking off from our pleasure, destroys that end." I will grant that, if the obscurity be great, constant, and unsurmountable, this is certainly true; but, if it be only found in particular passages, proceeding from the nature of the subject, and the very genius of the composition, it does not rob us of our pleasure, but superadds a new one, which arises from conquering a difficulty; and the pleasure which accrues from a difficult passage, when well understood, provided the passage itself be a fine one, is always more permanent than that which we discover at the first glance. The lyric Muse, like other fine ladies, requires to be courted, and retains her admirers the longer, for not having yielded too readily to solicitations. This argument, ending, as it does, in a sort of simile, will I am persuaded, not only have its force with intelligent readers (the ΣΥΝΕΤΟΙ), but also with the men of fashion; as to critics of a lower class, it may be sufficient to transcribe, for their improvement, an unfinished remark, or rather maxim, which I found amongst our author's papers; and which he probably wrote on occasion of the common preference given to his Elegy: "The *Gout de Comparaison*, as Bruyere styles it, is the only taste of ordinary minds. They do not know the *specific* excellency, either of an author or a composition: for instance, they do not know that Tibullus spoke the language of Nature and Love; that Horace saw the varieties and follies of mankind with the most penetrating eye, and touched them to the quick; that Virgil embellished even the most common images, by the graces of a glowing, melodious, and well-adapted expression; but they do know, that Virgil was a better poet than Horace; and that Horace's Epistles do not run so well as the Elegies of Tibullus."

I think it will not be disputed, that there is at least one other species of obscurity in composition, than that referred to, and defended by, Mr. Mason. It is an obscurity arising, not from abrupt expression or remote allusion, not from the tumult of the poet's mind, not from

the rapidity of the movements of passion, which allow of no elucidating details, but from the forced arrangement of words, the obscure construction of sentences; and it is in this, I believe, that consists the obscurity complained of in Gray, and which reflects no credit on his powers of expression. He, for instance, can have no taste for poetry, who is displeased with the obscurity of some of the historical allusions in the second ternary of the Bard:

> Above, below, the rose of snow,
> Twin'd with her blushing foe, we spread;
> The bristled boar, in infant-gore,
> Wallows beneath the thorny shade.

There is a legitimate lyrical obscurity in the abruptness of the several passages in this ternary. We are not offended with the sudden introduction of new objects, or with the great variety of emotion;—*Mighty victor, mighty lord.* —*Fair laughs the Morn,*—*Fill high the sparkling bowl!*—*Heard ye the din of battle bray?*—Nothing is more natural, nothing is more intelligible to a reader of sensibility, than the detached sentences in the strophe of the third ternary:

> Stay, oh stay, nor thus, forlorn,
> Leave me, unbless'd, unpitied, here to mourn!
> —In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
> They melt, they vanish from my eyes!
> —But, oh! what solemn scenes, on Snowdon's height,
> Descending slow, their glitt'ring skirts unroll?
> —Visions of glory, spare my aching sight!
> —Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!
> —No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail;
> All hail, ye genuine kings! Britannia's Issue, hail!

So much for the obscurity of passion: this is an obscurity which is far from leaving the mind unoccupied; our imagination is busy, and our feelings are warmed; but something very different from this occurs, when language is addressed to the understanding, of the tendency of which the understanding can discover nothing: an idea is intended to be developed, but no idea presents itself; and the mind has no choice but between perplexity and vacuum. Let the reader refer to the context, and then tell me the meaning of the following lines:

> The verse adorn again
> Fierce War, and faithful Love,
> And Truth severe, in fairy-fiction drest:
> In buskin'd measures move
> Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
> With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.

Even when he is told, that the allusions are to the poetry of Spenser and Shakspeare, does he readily see the argument, that, *notwithstanding* the massacre of the bards, '*again*, fierce War, and faithful Love, and Truth severe, in fairy-fiction dressed, *adorn the verse;* and pale Grief, and pleasing Pain, with Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast, *move in buskined measures?*' and, when he sees it, does he discover the obscurity to be derived from any thing except a forced and unnatural arrangement of words, resulting only from the poet's inability to deliver himself more fluently; a species of obscurity which can have no admirers, and ought to have no defenders.

I shall briefly remark, that *great learning*, improperly applied, has a peculiar tendency to produce these obscurities, by inducing writers to construct their English according to the idioms of the ancient languages. To conclude, I trust that, in what I have here said, I shall be equally acquitted of hostility toward *great learning*, and toward those very admirable poems, the Sister-Odes.

STATERUS.

THE DAY.

BY DAVID DIARY.

No. 10.

> Ille potens sui
> Lætusque deget, cui licet in diem
> Dixisse, Vixi.
>
> HOR.

IN my preceding paper, I have observed that happiness, though it is the proper aim, is rarely, if ever, the attainment of humanity. Happiness is that state of being in which the body and mind are at rest, susceptible of pleasure, and free from the pressure or apprehension of pain. After assenting to this definition, which will not, I believe, be disputed, it seems scarcely reasonable, consistently

with what we know of the world, to expect happiness at its hands. Life is a state of labour and vicissitude, things directly opposite to happiness.

It is useful to take this view of our condition and prospects, since, as I have before had occasion to intimate, nothing is more essential to us than to limit our expectations according to the limits of nature. This is to curb the imagination by the reins of experience, and to draw us from an ideal creation to that to which we belong, and to the influences to which we are subject. This is to place Truth before our eyes, and accustom us to view her undisguised. Stripped of the paint and trappings with which Error had concealed her form and features, we may not view her without some disdisappointment; but this inconvenience will wear away with the novelty, and we shall have the advantage of possessing realities, where we had wandered among dreams; of feeling our ground firm, and of seeing our way clearly.

The harshest lines of the picture are finished; the strongest shadows are put in; what remains, is to soften and to harmonise. The happiness I have defined is positive happiness. Nothing is more certain, than that this cannot be the lot of an intelligent and sublunary creature. To be at rest, to enjoy perfect health and every physical comfort, to be forgetful of all evils past, and thoughtless of all to come, and withal to be awake, is a state of which, I hope, there are few who do not, from time to time, partake, and this state is happiness. But happiness, such as the definition requires, must be lasting; and that this state should be lasting, in any human bosom, is impossible. Neither wealth, nor fortune, nor fame, nor strength, nor knowledge, nor virtue, nor wisdom, can bestow it. It has no dwelling on this earth, except in the imagination of mankind. It is a creature of the brain; and, with many others of a similar character, after this manner we form it: we take a transitory good, and add to it, duration.

It appears then, that positive happiness, at last, is found, when reached, to be but a transitory good; a calm and tranquil pleasure: it is found to be this, or it is not found at all. But, man sighs for that which is lasting! The sun descends from the zenith, the flowers decay, the leaves fall, beauty fades, youth vanishes, vigour declines, and man, amid the universal change, man sighs for that which is lasting! He disdains the fleeting pleasures, and asks for that which will stay by him.

And, has the world no happiness? no durable happiness? It has; but it is a happiness not to be defined like that of which I have spoken. It is comparative happiness. It is a state, not, like the other, of good unmixed with evil, and of good unvarying, but in which good, now less, now more, preponderates. It is a state consistent with toil, change, and the apprehension of change. It is a state, not of fruition, but of hope. Every man may be said to be happy, who has not survived hope; who does not despair of what is most essential to his peace: he is more or less happy, and his state is that of comparative happiness.

Such is the happiness the world has to offer; such is the general allotment of human life, of which each individual receives his peculiar portion. The portions, in spite of many circumstances that tend to equalise them, and which do equallise them in a thousand cases where they appear unequal, are, no doubt, really different; but the principle that pervades them is the same.—They all consist in a state of being, open both to the inroads of sorrow and to the advances of joy, supportable only through patience, seasoned only through pleasure, and made happy only through hope.

Proceeding upon these grounds, we may make some useful reflections on our condition, and form some useful resolutions for our conduct. Pope has said, of happiness, that it is overlooked by the wise, and seen double by the fool. To ascertain what it is, is the best method of securing ourselves from the danger of overlooking or of seeing it double. He that sets out to seek a house

which he believes a palace, overlooks it, if it be really no more than a cottage. It is very important therefore to know what happiness is; for, otherwise, it may be at our elbow while we are ignorant of its presence. To have false notions of the characteristics of things, maintains us in continued deception. The Indian, who wished to see the king of England, scarcely suffered himself to be persuaded that he had already stood before him, because he imagined that all kings made presents to those who came to them: Even you, said he, to his guide, have given me a white dog; but, the person whom you call the king, has given me nothing!

When we know of what the happiness to which we may aspire is made, our mind is set at rest, and we have leisure to enjoy our inheritance, be it what it may. We cultivate what we possess, rather than spend our time in calculating upon, and our strength in searching for, more. Our happiness, then, is such as I have described. We all know, I believe, what it is both to be happy and to be unhappy, and we know them to be alike transitory in their nature. He that passes years of happiness finds them mingled with many hours of unhappiness, and I hope the converse of the proposition is true. Perpetual unhappiness must be a personal disease, and not the infliction of fortune. A man may have in his mind a cause of continual regret, or labour under continual privation; but neither the one nor the other, unless all the powers of his nature are exhausted, can darken every sun that shines.

But, if this be the true description of happiness, is there not some mistake in the ordinary estimate? Is it not a thing of a more every-day complexion than is commonly reckoned upon? Is it so bright, or so rare, as is supposed? Is it not more like the pebble on the way-side than the diamond in the mine? Is it so seldom found, or so captivating when seen? Is it so far out of reach, or is the man so far above his fellows who holds it? Let us be assured, that it is formed of materials that are not of that kind with which the world is endowed but sparingly. Let us moderate our notions, and value our treasures. Let us be satisfied with an humble happiness, and we shall have it. It consists, not in a permanent unmingled good, but in an aggregate of enjoyments; of enjoyments trivial and transitory, but numerous as well as transitory, and which, if we suffer to pass unnoticed, while we wait for the colossus we dream of, we shall have foolishly neglected. I repeat it, happiness is an aggregate, a compound; and, if we throw aside all the parts, we shall lose the whole. Men are, for the most part, happy in this particular, and unhappy in that; or, they enjoy one species or source of happiness, and are denied another; and, when they describe themselves as absolutely unhappy, it is because their eyes, bent on what they have not, disregard what they have.

I have been led, I scarcely know how, into the consideration of a subject the most interesting and important to our hearts, whether we feel for ourselves or for others; I have treated it cursorily and without arrangement; but I have hope that the observations I have set down will not wholly fail, in recalling those who err from, or confirming those who stand in, the true path in this inquiry. The definition of happiness I have myself sought for, in many writers, without success. Their ideas have appeared to me vague or superficial. It is possibly without reason that I am more partial to my own. On this question others must decide. What I think of importance is, that we should form correct views of the real nature of human life; that we should shake off, or guard ourselves against, a melancholy philosophy, a philosophy which, however little suspected by those who profess it, is full of irrational pride, the parent of melancholy; and that we should understand what happiness is, because to understand it is to go far toward its enjoyment:

> In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;
> All quit their spheres, and rush into the skies.

For the Port Folio.

BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF RACINE.

(*Continued from page* 826.)

We now resume, with great pleasure, the Biography of Racine, which we have been obliged to interrupt, not from want of diligence in our friend the translator, nor from any weariness of our own in contemplating the author of Athalie, but from the very great press of matter with which our papers are now like that generous measure described in the Bible "heaped and pressed, and running over." We should be ungrateful to the translator, if we wilfully neglected, for a moment, an article to the formation of which he is so competent, both from Taste and Discipline, and which he has finished in a style of elegance, commanding our fullest approbation.

The polite reader will perceive, even through the darkness of democracy, that the sun shone on the head of genius in the age of of Louis XIV. This *arbitrary* Monarch thought that Racine would not write worse comedies in consequence of the receipt of a just reward for his literary labour. But to the immortal honour of *free* governments, a *Congress* of the *People* may promulgate a law, requiring even the petty printer of fugitive papers to dole them out in small parcels, as a Scotch pedlar sells pins, or a Cheapside haberdasher his gimp and garters. When this liberal and right noble service is performed by the wretch who is in slavery to the system, he receives, not Colbert's order to Racine with a royal signet, but, how shall we describe so shadowy a process? he receives a sort of *assignat* of worthlessness, a bit of "ragged and rumpled" official paper, a kind of resemblance of an old *continental* bill of fraud of the last and lowest depreciation.

AMID the general clamour which the partizans of the great Corneille excited against the author of Andromache, Racine obtained the priory of Epinay. This benefice was to him a source of so much vexatious litigation, that he thought he could not better console himself for the perplexity it had occasioned, than by writing the comedy of *Les Plaideurs*. This piece appeared in 1668. I will not here repeat the different anecdotes to which it gave rise; they are inserted in the preface of the editors, which is prefixed to it in this edition. I will only add that it was undoubtedly to the pleasure which the representation of this comedy afforded to Louis XIV, that Racine was indebted for the gratuity of 1200 livres, which he received by an express order of M. Colbert.[9]

Nothing has a stronger tendency to animate the genius of a man of letters than the attention which is paid to his labours; this art was that of Colbert. This great man, whose administration forms an epoch in the progress of the sciences and fine arts, neglected no opportunity of exciting Racine to new efforts. He knew that talents which languish in obscurity, are seldom capable of lofty flights, and a reward opportunely bestowed, communicates life and vigour to the soul, strengthens its confidence, and almost invariably prompts it to greater exertion and to more lofty flights.

The tragedy of *Britannicus* appeared in 1669; it was completely unsuccessful. Racine however exhibited great talent in the composition of this piece. *Berenice*, which succeeded it in 1671, elicited extravagant praise. We should be surprized at its success, did not our own age afford examples equally striking of the singularity of public opinions. The slight allusions, which the audience imagined they discovered in this piece, to certain events of the time at which it was represented, were undoubt-

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[9] We subjoin the copy of this order, found among the papers of Racine.

"M. Charles le Bègue, member of the king's council, treasurer general of his edifices, we command you to pay to M. Racine, out of the monies in your possession for the service of the present year, even out of those destined by his majesty for the payment of the pensions and annuities of men of letters, as well of France as of foreign countries, who excel in all kinds of science, the sum of 1200 livres which we have assigned for the pension and gratuity which his majesty has granted to him in consideration of his application to belles-lettres, and of the dramas which he has given to the publick. And the said sum of 1200 livres shall be passed and allowed in your accounts by the Comptrollers of Paris, which we request them to do without difficulty. Done at Paris, the last day of December, 1668.

"(Signed) Colbert.

"La Motte Coquart."

edly the cause of its favourable reception: thus casual circumstances often contribute powerfully to give value to things in themselves the most indifferent. Corneille, who had written a tragedy on the same subject, found on this occasion that it is often less difficult to crown ourselves with laurel wreaths, than it is afterwards to preserve them in a state of unfading verdure.

The triumph which Racine gained on this occasion over that great man, was perhaps less the effect of the preference which his piece merited, than of the talents of Mademoiselle de Champmélé, whose performance of the part of Berenice was honoured with loud and universal applause. This actress, after having for some time performed at the different provincial theatres, came to Paris and made her debut at the theatre *du Marais*. She did not possess wit; but she evinced a sound judgment, a familiar acquaintance with the world, great sweetness of manners, and a certain charming naïveté in her mode of expression, which is often preferable to more brilliant genius. The sound of her voice was graceful and pathetic, her figure tall and noble, and she possessed so many graces, that one would have said she had endeavoured to unite them all in her person in order to compensate for the want of beauty which she did not possess. A decided predilection for the theatre at first supplied the place of talent. La Roque, one of her companions, was the first who perceived her aptitude for declamation, and he cultivated this talent so successfully, that in six months, she found herself capable of personating the chief characters in tragedy.

The theatre of the Hotel de Bourgogne was, at that period, more frequented than any other, because all the dramatic authors seemed to accord in preferring it for the representation of their pieces. Mademoiselle de Champmélé and her husband were desirous of being admitted as members of the company who performed there. The part of Hermione, in Andromache, in which she made her debut, was certainly the last she should have chosen, had she not possessed genuine talents, for there is scarcely any other part that requires more art, more delicacy, and a higher degree of that versatility of talent which never violates the rules of propriety, and developes every situation in an appropriate manner. Racine for a long time refused to witness this debut, apprehensive of seeing his work disfigured. He however yielded at length to the importunities of his friends.—His fears with respect to the talents of the new actress, seemed at first to gain confirmation. Mademoiselle de Champmélé performed the two first acts with languor; but she rose with so much vigour in the three last, she exhibited them with such glowing animation and so much of that genuine enthusiasm which the passions inspire, that she merited and received the loudest applause.

Mademoiselle des Oeillets, who had so well succeeded in the part of Hermione, when Andromache was first performed, witnessed this triumph of M. de Champmélé. So strongly did she seem to be impressed with the genius and talent for declamation, which her rival displayed, that she was apprehensive of being totally eclipsed; *des Oeillets is gone, is lost*, said she, on quitting the theatre. Yet Mademoiselle de Champmélé never completely attained to the excellence of her rival: and to this circumstance is attributable the sentiment of Louis XIV, who said *that des Oeillets ought to have performed the two first acts of this piece, and Champmélé the three last; for that the latter possessed more fire and enthusiasm to represent the ravings of the personage in the last acts of the piece, and the former more versatile delicacy.*

Racine hastened to felicitate Mademoiselle de Champmélé on her success. Transported with joy and pleasure, he ran to her dressing-room. It is difficult, perhaps almost impossible for an author who has seen his sentiments expressed according to his own conceptions of them, to testify his satisfaction with moderation. Racine prostrated him-

self at the feet of this actress; the compliments which he paid her were so flattering that they were considered as the first expression of the amorous attachment which he afterwards evinced for her. From that moment he destined all his first characters for her; it was even asserted that he composed them expressly for her, and that above all, he endeavoured to accommodate them to that kind of declamation which she had adopted.

(*To be continued.*)

POETICAL INQUIRIES.

No. 1.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history of poetry is an interesting branch of the history of man; it discovers to us his sentiments and his manners. By comparing the poetry of different ages and nations, we obtain the best insight into what is changeable and local, and what is unchangeable and universal, in the human character.—Nothing so much engages our sympathy, and improves our acquaintance with our fellow-creatures. We become the confidants of their joys and their sorrows and we perceive their resemblance of these to our own. We are introduced to their private walks, their fire sides, and their public assemblies. We hear the language of their hearts, and the conclusions of their reason; we are made acquainted with their feelings and their principles. The further we extend this research, the more comprehensive our view of a most valuable branch of knowledge, and the greater our gratification. While so many religious and political distinctions necessarily subdivide mankind, how delightful to moderate our prejudices and soften our animosities, to lower our self-conceit, to warm our benevolence and to expand our faculties, by entering into this species of conversation with the whole world; a conversation conducted in the universal language, the language of the heart! While the lapse of a few years obliterates the traces of those who have gone before us, and would leave us as ignorant of them as of those who are to come after us, how delightful to become acquainted, through these records, not merely with their physical, but with their moral existence!

> Their tears, their little triumphs, o'er,
> Their human passions now no more,
> Save Charity, that glows beyond the tomb.

Such are the higher, or some of the higher, philosophical uses of poetical reading; but the mere indulgence of curiosity is another, and a sufficient, motive: for curiosity is a principle of action by which, though without a grave exterior, very important purposes are served. No doubt, curiosity, so correct in its origin, and so valuable in its end, may be viciously or idly employed; but, in general, it is an instinct by which we are induced, through the stimulus of pleasure, to acquire information. Curiosity, though gratified with no philosophical design, not the less influences our philosophy.

Now, that pleasure, which is the apparent and immediate object of curiosity, is abundantly to be found amid poetical reading. To discover the objects which fix the attention of other men, their manner of viewing them, and the influence to which their minds are subject, from local, temporary, physical and moral causes, and the degree in which the abstract principles of their nature are superior to all restraint; to discover these, and a thousand other particulars, cannot but be the enjoyment of a very lively pleasure.

A third design of poetical reading is that of moral and literary criticism.—With a view either to philosophy or pleasure, we desire to know only what poetry actually affords; but, in criticism, we seek its agreement with what is right, whether as it regards ethics or the art. Considered thus, poetical reading is a school in which we are to receive the rules of composition, in which taste is to be cultivated, and practice improved.

It is not necessary to dwell on any of the points before us; and, accordingly, they are here only sketched, or suggested: but enough, surely, has been said, to recommend the design of what this

paper is intended to propose and introduce, a series of Poetical Inquiries.

The outlines that have been given, though loose, are large; and they will be seen to comprehend a field of immeasurable extent. What range the present papers shall take it is not material to determine. However great, it could only be a part; and here only a very small part is contemplated. Poetical Inquiries may be multiplied without end; the reader may multiply them at his pleasure; the number directly planned is extremely limited; but their fewness will not make them incomplete, while their extension will always increase the utility of the plan. Of that utility, exclusively of what has already been advanced, it will be sufficient to remark, that it must necessarily belong to two principal features of this work; its uniting in a single point of view the objects to which it is devoted, and its tendency to excite a degree of inquiry infinitely beyond what it is designed, or, under any circumstances, could be hoped, to gratify, and to agitate questions of criticism and taste; from which agitation alone, mental improvement can spring.

If, on this occasion, it were desired to take a more detailed view of the subject, means would not be wanting for giving it the most attractive appearance, and awakening the attention of the reader. It would be easy to rouse his ardour, in a pursuit rich in all that is calculated to strike, or to please. He could not remain insensible to a prospect abounding with all that is sweet, and all that is impressive; with the fairest flowers, and with relics and monuments more instructive than arches, amphitheatres, or pyramids. What contrasts, between the poetry of the poles, and the poetry of the tropics! What soft images of pleasure, what predilections for gloom and horror! What melancholy pictures of human suffering, in two northern poems, some time since inserted in the Port Folio! How peculiar, and above all, how unlike the poetry of the subject of better laws! for, in this case, we are not to say, the native of happier regions.

But, without entering further into reflections or illustrations of this kind, we shall briefly notice the objects to which our first Poetical Inquiries will be given.

Some things have an extrinsic title to our curiosity, while their intrinsic value, however great, is a secondary consideration. Among these, the *Moällakat*, or Seven Poems that were suspended on the walls, or gate, of the temple at Mecca, may be ranked. To many, the history of these poems has an air of mystery; and, to many more, their contents are unknown. In the papers immediately succeeding, we shall present both the one and the other.

In another department of the Port Folio, the Sister-Odes of Gray have been examined. The poems of that great writer, though few and short, have been made the subject of an unusual portion of criticism. That it is so, is a high testimony to their merit. Writings, which can bear so close an inspection, must be good. They must abound in beauties; and we cannot too attentively examine the beauties of fine writers. But, along with their beauties, they must also have their defects, and on these too we should set a decisive mark. We are in continual danger of regarding as perfect, that by which we are much pleased: we see no faults, or, what is worse, we persuade ourselves that, if not beauties, they are not faults. This is the death of criticism, and the ruin of taste. Of the Sister-Odes, as already before the readers of the Port Folio, we shall say nothing; but, of the other poems of Gray, we shall submit a similar examination. It will be found, that even the Elegy, though read and repeated by every one, affords occasion for remarks, neither obvious nor insignificant.

Of other topics directly before us, we may name one which, we persuade ourselves, will not be unacceptable to any reader of British Poetry. This is, an inquiry into the merits of the *minor* and *modern* poets of Great Britain.

In proposing *poetical inquiries*, it may not be ill-timed to say something

of poetry itself; of its definition, its origin, its charms, and its value. We shall touch on each of these heads, with the same brevity that has pervaded the preceding part of this paper. According to the literal signification of the word, *poetry* might mean any thing *made* or *produced;* and therefore denote, with equal propriety, any work proceeding from the mind of man. According to others, *poetry* is the work of *invention*, *fiction*, or *fancy*. It is probable, however, that it originally meant, what it is still commonly thought to mean, *verse*, or *metrical composition*. If there be a diversity of opinion upon this point, it is because of the different qualities essential to poetry; the richness of invention, the beauties of diction, and the harmony of measure. It may be observed, that we are at times disposed to attribute the name of poetry to each of these three things, though standing alone; thus, to a work abounding in fancy, or to language lofty or adorned, we apply the epithet *poetical;* but, we must observe further, that we never say *poetical measure*, no more than *vinum humidus;* and it may be inferred, that *measure* cannot be *poetical*, because it is poetry itself; whereas, language and style may be *poetical*, because they may be such as are usually found in poetry. Poetry, therefore, is metrical composition.

But, if this be right, there is an error in certain theories on the *origin* of poetry. According to these, we are to discover this in the strong emotions of the human breast, and in the objects that store with images the mind; but, if poetry be essentially *metrical* composition, it is from the constitution of the human ear that we are to deduce it; while it is its fervour, pathos, and imagery alone, that are derivable from the passions and the fancy. Poetry, in this view, has for its prime object the gratification of our taste for *the harmony of sounds*. Other compositions may move the heart, or sway the imagination; but *poetry* is peculiar in this, that it wins upon the ear.

After what has just been said, we have little to add respecting its charms. Poetry is music, combined with sentiment, description, or imagery. Need we enlarge further on its charms?

On the value of poetry, as few words are necessary. Poetry, that is metrical composition, is valuable, first as it adorns, and secondly, as it perpetuates. It adorns, by lending to sentiments, description, or imagery, an enchanting medium of communication; it perpetuates, not merely mechanically, by impressing the ear into the service of the memory, but by giving, if we may so say, a body and a place; 'a local habitation and a name.' Abu Teman, as we are told by sir William Jones, was wont to say, That fine sentiments, delivered in prose, are like gems scattered at random; but that, when confined by numbers, they resemble bracelets, and strings of pearl.

For the Port Folio.

MISCELLANY.

REFLECTIONS ON MUSIC,

From Feijoo.

WE boast of the great progress made by the musicians of our days in their profession, as if, from an insipid, heavy and rude harmony, they had passed to a sweet, light, and delicate music; to the degree that as many imagine, that the practice of the art has reached in the present age the utmost point of perfection to which it can aspire. In our first volume, we compared the music of this age with that of the past; but that question is but little connected with the design of the present discourse: what it is more important to examine is, whether the music of the moderns (in which we comprehend that of the present age and that of the past) ought to be regarded as inferior or as superior to that which, two thousand years ago, was in use among the Greeks.

The subject is treated very learnedly by the author of the dialogue of Theagenes and Callimachus, printed at Paris, in the year 1725. This writer affirms and demonstrates, that the ancient musicians exceeded the modern in expression, in delicacy, in variety and in skilfulness of execution. Of the same sentiments, as to their greater perfection, taken in general, is our great expositor of the Scripture, Father Don Augustin Calmet, in the first volume of his Dissertationes Biblicas, p. 403, where he declares his approbation of the opinions and taste which, respect-

ing music, we manifested in our first volume; for which reason we shall quote his words.

Many, he observes, regard as the effect of rudeness and imperfection the simplicity of the ancient music: but we think that this simplicity ought to be received in testimony of its perfection; for, to the extent that an art deserves to be judged perfect, so far it approaches nature. And who will deny, that simple music is that which most approaches nature, and which best imitates the voice and passions of men? It is this which insinuates itself most easily into the inmost foldings of the breast, and most certainly wins upon the heart and moves the passions. The conception we have of the simplicity of the ancient music is erroneous. Its simplicity indeed was great; but it was at the same time as remarkable for its fulness; for the ancients had many instruments, of only a small number of which the knowledge has descended to us; nor were they wanting in comprehension of consonance and harmony. Let it be added, to the increase of the advantage possessed by their music over ours, that the sound of the instruments, did not, instead of augmenting their energy, confound the words of the song; and that, while the ear was delighted with the sweetness of the voice, the mind was filled with the elegance and softness of the verse. We ought not to be amazed at the prodigious effects related of the music of the ancients, since their auditors tasted together, and at the same moment, the pleasures which, in our theatres, are never to be enjoyed but separately.

It is to be confessed, that we do not know, with any precision, the specific character of the ancient music; for though Plutarch and other writers have left us writings upon this subject, they have not expressed themselves with that clearness and detail which is requisite for instituting an exact comparison between that and our own. Hence, it is only by the aid of two extrinsic principles that we can decide the question. The first is that which is intimated by Father Calmet, the prodigious effects of the ancient music.—Where is now to be seen even the shadow of that facility with which the more skilful musicians of Greece now irritated and now soothed the passions, now enraged and now cooled the affections of their hearers. We may refer to the name of Antigenidas, who, striking a martial key, so infuriated Alexander the Great that, in the middle of a delicious banquet, he rose half frantic from the table, and siezed his arms; and to Timotheus, another musician, attendant on the same prince, of whom not only the same thing is related, but much more; for, after raising the choler of Alexander, he could so soften his tones as to moderate his fury and to allay his anger.

Nor is there any thing less admirable in what we are told of Empedocles (either the famous philosopher of Agrigentum, or a son of his, of the same name), who, playing a delightful air upon his flute, stopped the hand of a young man who had unsheathed his steel to plunge it into the breast of an enemy on whom he desired to be avenged. Another instance is that of Tyrteus, a captain of the Lacedemonians, in an expedition against the Messenians. It was the custom of that nation to prepare for battle with music. Causdillo, who excelled in his profession, playing a tune full of grave tranquillity, inspired the soldiers with a sort of quiet tameness which would have made them the victims of their enemies, had he not, warned by Tyrteus of the danger, passed to a warlike movement, which, rousing their energies anew, and, inflaming them with courage, rendered them masters of the victory. The same alternation of rage and stillness is said to have been produced, through the variation of tones, by Pythagoras, in one Joven, the subject of another passion, not less violent than that of anger. Above all, is the miracle attributed to Terpander, who, striking his lyre, stopped a sedition in Lacedæmon.

Nor was the power of the music of the ancients experienced only in moving the affections of the mind, but equally in its influence over various infirmities of the body. Theophrastus relates, that the bite of certain venemous reptiles was cured by a concert of various musical instruments. Asclepiades is said to have cured lunatics with the same remedy, and Ismenas, of Thebes, the sciatica, and other painful disorders. I do not pretend that all these parts of history are to be admitted as indisputable; but they may be received as probable, because they have nothing in them that is impossible, and because all the effects of musical expression may be explained upon principles purely mechanical, and without recurrence to occult qualities, or mysterious sympathies.

The second extrinsic principle, from which the perfection of the ancient music may be deduced, is the great application given to it by the Greeks. It was customary with them, after a banquet, to pass the lyre, from hand to hand, around the company, and he that could not touch it was regarded as vulgar, and deficient in education. The Arcadians, more peculiarly, may be cited on this occasion. They practised music from their infancy to the thirtieth year of their age. Now it is not to be doubted, that in proportion as the professors of an art be multiplied so is the perfection advanced; partly because emulation excites them to seek after new beauties, by the aid of which to surpass others; and partly because it is easier, among many than among few, to find geniuses who excel, as well in invention as in execution. The practice of music, therefore, having been much more general among the ancients than among the moderns, it is highly probable that the

former excelled the latter in the art; and, that the latter, instead of embellishing modern music, with beauties unknown to the ancient, have lost the principles of that music, without discovering others equivalent.

ON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE ANCIENTS.

From the same.

AS to musical instruments, we may say much of the great variety possessed by the ancients. Calmet, who treats on the subject, in a dissertation on those employed by the Hebrews, describes many; and, in his Diccionario Biblico, gives a plate on which is engraved twenty distinct species. It is to be believed, that among the Greeks, a more polished people, and greater lovers of music, there were still a greater number. We have no reason to flatter ourselves that our inventive talents have gone further in this art than theirs; for we have lost their ingenious invention of the hydraulic organ, which was in use among them, and of which Ctesibio, a mathematician of Alexandria is believed to have been the author, more than a century before the christian era, and which it has since, as is related by Vossius, been in vain laboured to restore. It is proper also to observe, that many of the instruments which we regard as the invention of these latter ages, were well known in others more remote. Such are the viol and violin, the antiquity of which is proved by the author of the dialogue of Theagenes and Callimachus, from a medal described by Vigenete, and a statue of Orpheus, now in Rome.

[By the politeness of a French Gentleman in this city, we are frequently favoured with some of the best productions of the Parisian press. Among other valuable works we have perused with great pleasure several volumes abounding in numerous well written articles, entitled The Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique. This valuable system of Biography, published under the auspices of Mess. Chaudon and Delandine has reached the eighteenth edition of 1804, and is adorned with a motto, which, one would suppose was a sufficient pledge of perfect impartiality, in describing the lives and fortunes of the learned. It is that memorable passage in the initial section of the first book of his History, in which Tacitus expresses his exemption from an improper bias.

Mihi Galba, Otho, Vitellius, nec beneficio, nec injuria cogniti.

The compilers of this Dictionary, many hundred articles of which we have perused with the fullest approbation, have unfortunately sometimes forgotten the spirit of this motto, when it is their business to delineate the biography of *Englishmen*. They are then both partial and unjust: among other proofs which might be adduced, the following sketch of the life of SMOLLET, which we have amused ourselves with translating, is a curious instance of false and malignant prejudice. Zeal, for a favourite and truly original writer, urges us to inform these French critics, that their assertion that, the author of Roderick Random was but an indifferent writer is, in spite of all their assurance, destitute of a shadow of foundation.

Their opinion of his History of England is equally absurd. This work, though avowedly written in haste, and sometimes in the spirit of a partizan, is full of vivacity and vigour. It is never *dull*, it is never dry, it abounds in reflexions, its tones are various and harmonious; and by the energy of some passages, and the eloquence of others, it affects both the imagination and the heart. A critic must be utterly devoid of discernment as well as of candour, who pronounces the historical style of this ingenious Scotchman to be utterly devoid of energy and grace. The criticism on the splenetic style of his travels is better founded, but all that follows to the end of the article, is the very reverse of justice and truth.]

* *Thomas* Smollet, an English physician, was born at Cameron, in Scotland, in 1720,

* For Thomas read *Tobias*, and for William Pickle read *Peregrine*. The French are extremely unlucky whenever they tamper with English proper names. Rousseau, in one of his mad rambles, assumes the name of *Douding*, without a suspicion of its purity. In his Eloisa, he introduces a Lord Edward *Bomston*, a nobleman of a family wholly unknown in England; and I have, somewhere, read or heard of a French romance, the hero of which was a certain Duke of *Workinsheton*. The Parisian wits frequently talk of the adventures of M. *Pikle*, and of M. *Rantom*, and *Tome Jons*, and all the while imagine themselves speaking words of *exceeding good command*, like Bardolph in the play. Indeed not only the French translator is very awkward and bungling whenever he lays his lame and luckless hand upon a proper name, but the genius of the tongue itself is, in this respect, too often grossly licentious and enormously ridiculous. The rage which some of their early coxcombs of literature had for *Frenchifying* every thing, has made them take liberties with the Latin and Greek languages, that, not only utterly destroy their dignity, sweetness, and strength, but too often cover them with a thick veil of obscurity; and whenever *Quinte Curce*, *Marc Aurele*, and *Tite Live*, are brought on the French stage to personate their illustrious originals, the

and died in Italy, in the year 1771. He was at the siege of Carthagena, and travelled through France and the south of Europe. He was more distinguished as an author than as a physician. Perhaps he might have been an excellent physician, but it is *certain he was but an indifferent writer.* Poetry, History, Romance, and literature in general, employed his pen by turns. He has produced 1st, The History of England, in four vols. 4to. translated into French by M. Farge, in nineteen vols. 12mo. to which he added a continuation to the year 1763, in five vols. 12mo. Smollet had not one of the qualities of a good historian. He is both partial and passionate, and *makes no atonement for these faults by the elegance of his style.* By a *dry* detail of facts, by a *monotonous detail* of circumstances, without *interposing a solitary reflection,* he touches neither the imagination nor the heart, and fatigues while he strives to edify his reader. His style is utterly devoid of energy and grace. 2nd, Travels in France, published in the year 1766. Afflicted with asthma and spleen, Smollet came in the year 1763 to France, in quest of Health and Cheerfulness, but probably found neither, for in the whole course of his narrative he appears dissatisfied with every thing, and full of disgust towards the men and objects he came to survey. 3d, An Abridgement of Travels, arranged in chronological order, seven vols. 12mo. The style of this book is weak and heavy, and the incidents by no means amusing. 4th, Several Novels—*William* Pickle, four vols. 12mo. Ferdinand Count Fathom, Launcelot Greaves, Roderick Random, which has been translated into French, in three vols. 12mo. 5th, Satires, the Reprisal a Farce, the Regicide a Tragedy, founded on the death of Charles I; productions of no more merit than his novels, which are almost utterly destitute of spirit and of style. 6th, The Critical Review, a periodical work published from 1755 to 1763, in which it is vain to seek for that playfulness of wit, delicacy of taste, correctness of judgment, and urbanity of style, which are the characteristics of critics of the most celebrity.

Public may be assured that this is a Bartholemew Fair exhibition, where Kemble never comes, and Jack Pudding is the head of the shabby scene. In fact, the more we study the French language, the more we are convinced that it has been overrated by some of its extravagant admirers. The classical writers, of the age of Louis XIV always excepted, we think there is more grimace than grandeur on the apish face of their complimentary phrase, and more strut than dignity in the procession of their rhetorical periods. Boileau, who drank of the inspiration of antiquity, and basked in the favour of his prince, had noble privileges and used them all. He and some others vindicate the honours of their idiom. As for the rabble of republican bellowers and scribblers, who, since the execrable epoch of 1789, have polluted every French fountain, they, if possible, write and speak in a worse taste than our July orators, or those simple souls, who, in the year 1775, crammed their crudities down the throats of a gaping people.

VARIETY.

The following verses were made on an egregious glutton, who complained that the conversation of the company spoiled his dinner.

Gomor etant à table avec certains pedants,
Qui crioient et prêchoient trop haut sur la vendange;
Lui qui ne songe alors qu' à ce que font ses dens
Paix là, paix là, dit-il, on ne sait ce qu' on mange.

Imitated.

Gomor, a hog of Epicurus' sty,
At dinner view'd each dish with curious eye;
The pedant guests around him clamour'd loud,
Of endless talk and ceaseless bawling proud:
Cease, cease, cried Gomor, your confounding prate,
I scarce can taste the viands on my plate.

We find in the Lexicon of Suidas, that a Lacedæmonian execrated those whom he hated by these three wishes: that they might build houses, buy fine clothes, and marry coquettes.

A Gentleman, who had been jilted by his mistress, wrote in indignation the following lines to revenge himself.

Lise, a beau faire mignarde,
Chaque jour elle s'enlaidit,
Ce n' est pas que je la regarde,
Mais tout le monde me dit.

Imitated.

Chloe no more coquets—she 's wise,
Each day less brilliant are her eyes,
Her form scarce seems the same;
So long a stranger to her face,
I cannot say I know the case,
I trust to general fame.*

* In this imitation the thought is, perhaps, overlayed by the expression, and the point too much blunted; but the original is one of the most pungent epigrams of the Lampoon class, that we ever recollect to have perused, and with the force of sharpened steel must have pierced the heart of the capricious fair who was its theme, especially if we believe the authority of St. Evremont, who knew the sex perfectly well, and who assures us that, the last sighs of a woman on her death bed, are not so much for the loss of life as for the loss of beauty.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

For the Port Folio.

MR. OLDSCHOOL,

Should you deem the following lines worthy of publication, they are much at your service, from,

Sir, your humble servant,

J. M. Q—t—n.

IN ancient times (so fame) our frugal sires
Each by his income measur'd his desires;
The produce of their farm and sturdy kine,
The fruits of nature and their mellow wine;
The neat, the simple home—the pleasing wife,
And all the dear regards of social life;
These their ambition—these their highest aim,
No sons of pleasure, nor of empty fame.
When injur'd honour call'd them to the field,
The sword, or spear, in Virtue's cause to wield,
O'er trembling lands their arms they fiercely spread,
And nobly conquer'd, or as nobly bled:
Such (says fam'd Maro's Verse) the Sabines were,
And such the sons of Mars, illustrious pair!
Perhaps my verse the nicer ear wo'n't please,
Tho' honest and tho' true, it suits not these;
Then let me harmonise my rustic page,
With scenes, more modern, of the present age.
.....Behold, how Delia sails amid the crowd,
(That she is handsome is by all allow'd),
Eyes the gay tribe that flutters at her heels,
Then eyes herself, and all the goddess feels.
A wit, a beauty, and oh! dearest sound!
Possess'd of three-times-twenty thousand pound!
If e'er, by chance, she drop a pray'r-like word,
'Tis always "grant, oh! grant me, heav'n, a Lord!"
At last, a brisk young sharper sees the prize,
Woos the fond nymph, and thanks his lucky eyes,
Enjoys her fortune, makes herself a ———r,
And kindly swears, he 'll never love *another;*
Next summer, takes a morning trip to France,
And leaves her ladyship to rail at chance.
Amanda next proceeds with humbler grace,
The smiling virtues playing in her face,
Blest with a genius, and what 's better still,
Blest with a handsome fortune at her will;
Fine without pride, and lovely without paint,
Ah! speak it not——Amanda is a saint.
But, hark! a Brother whispers, "Friend, take care,
Ye 're young—and destiny hangs by a hair:
A line may sink it, and a line may raise,
A page exalt you, or a page debase:
A single page, if studied with attention,
May gain at courts, a KNIGHTHOOD or a PENSION."
Come then, my Muse, together let us scan
Kings, Rulers, Courtiers, Liberty and Man;
Commend the honest, and expose the vain,
And mark ignobler follies where they reign.
At Court arriv'd—upon his Grace I call,
(Return'd but lately from W—m—t—r Hall),
Shew my credentials, tell him my condition,
And beg he 'll scrutinize my short petition.
His lordship 's "busy," (and tis almost three)
But "hopes" next day, "to see me at Levee."
With joy elate, I leave the lordly dome,
And, ev'ry nerve impatient hurry home,
Thro' all the night, am borne on Fancy's wing,
Then rise, and bless the C—h—l—r and the K——.
At twelve straight to St. J——s' I repair,
Admire the buildings, and review the fair.
At length, amid the crowd his Grace appears,
Clad in his robes, and reverend in years.
Hard by I stand, and ev'ry method try,
To gain his notice, and to catch his eye;
At last I meet his Lordship at the gate,
Make my obeisance, and inquire my fate!
My Lord is "sorry" but "the place is gone,"
Last night 'twas giv'n to S—'s eldest son.
All are infested with that direful itch,
All hurry headlong forward to get rich.
A conscience pawn'd—a soul forever sold,
Are only common efforts of the bold.
Ev'n M——bro fam'd in war, and brave in arms,
Could not resist bright Gold's delusive charms;
But, when advanc'd to grandeur's highest stage,
Lost his employ, and suffer'd Anna's rage.
"What crime" says honest Tom, "so great, so bold?
"What stain so deep!"——Why, friend, the love of Gold.
Enough, my Muse, where scanty is the praise,
Let 's leave the theme, and aim at nobler lays;
Why should we plunge into the boundless sea
Of vice, in all its forms and each degree;
The task how vain, for a weak Muse like mine,
Since Kings connive and Courtiers combine:
I 'll rather thank my stars, and kinder fate,
I was not born a Minister of State.

To Readers and Correspondents.

"Curiosa," with the inquisitiveness of her sex, is solicitous to learn our motive for concealing so carefully the name of a certain correspondent. We answer her in the words of a fable:

A poet, as once poets us'd,
To poverty was quite reduc'd;
No boy on errands to be sent,
On *his own messages* he went:
And once, with conscious pride and shame,
As from the chandler's shop he came,
Under his threadbare cloak, poor soul,
He cover'd—*half a peck of coal.*
A wag, his friend, began to smoke:
'George, tell us what's beneath your cloak.'
—Tell you! it were as well to show,
I hide it—*that you should not know.*

"Phocion" may rest assured that the principles he defends are not only obsolete, but totally foreign to the genius of our country.

Like rich old wardrobes, things extremely rare,
Extremely fine, but what no man will wear.

It is not worth while for "Vindex" to rib-roast such an adversary as he describes. The *cause* will not be advanced by laying on a blockhead the violent hands of Wit.

For as coarse iron, sharpen'd, mangles more,
And itch most hurts, when anger'd to a sore;
So, when you plague a fool, 'tis still the curse,
You only make the matter worse and worse.

EPIGRAMS.

The Likeness discovered.

When Chloe's picture was to Chloe shown,
Adorn'd with charms and beauty not her own;
Where Reynolds, pitying nature, kindly made
Such lips, such eyes, as Chloe never had;
Ye gods! she cries, in ecstasy of heart,
How near can nature be express'd by art!
Well, it is wond'rous like! nay, let me die,
The very pouting lip, the killing eye!—
Blunt and severe, as Manly in the play,
Downright replies—Like, Madam do you say?
The picture bears this likeness, it is true,
The canvas painted is, and so are you.

Her Friars holy, Rome does *Fathers* call,
The appellation 's just, and suits them all:
With nymphs delighted to converse and pray,
Few have more daughters or more sons than they.

NATURAL POLITENESS.

Sauntering with merry Jack of late,
We spy'd an odd triumvirate;
Two, almost as the steeple tall,
The third, like Esop, crook'd and small:
The tall their parting congees made,
The pigmy ne'er declin'd his head:
Says I, that dwarf no manners shows;
You err, cries Jack, he always *bows.*

Titius stands gazing for the clouded sun,
To be inform'd how fast his hours will run.
Ah, foolish Titius! art thou sound in mind,
To lose by seeking what thou seek'st to find?

From the French of M. St. Gelais.

One day behind my lady's back,
My lord attack'd her maid;
And stole a kiss, which she repaid,
And gave him smack for smack.
But with much freedom, Pray, said she,
Who kisses with the greatest glee;
Is it my lady?—Is it I?
'Tis you, no doubt, he made reply.
Why in good faith it must be true,
Resum'd the wanton dame,
For Tom, and John, and chaplain too,
All say the very same.

On a famous Physician being called out of Church.

Whilst holy prayers to heaven were made,
One soon was heard and answered too;
Save us from sudden death was said,
And straight from church Sir *Leech* withdrew.

The Topers.

Pale faces stand by, and our bright ones adore;
We look, like our wine, and you worse than our score.
Come, let 's light up our pimples; all art we outshine,
When the jolly god paints, then each stroke is divine;
Clean glasses our pencils, old claret our oil;
He that sits for his picture, must sit a good while.

The Prudent Maid.

Help me, Nature; help me Art;
Why should I deny my heart?
If a lover will pursue,
Like the wisest let me do;
I will fit him, if he 's true;
If he 's false, I 'll fit him too.

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